

Diocese of Shrewsbury
Department of Education



NEWSLETTER

Spring Term 2025 No.1



DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION NEWSLETTER SPRING 2025 No 1

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues

I write this first newsletter of 2025 having been appointed to the substantive role of Director of Schools just before the Christmas break. I wanted to take this opportunity to share that it is both an honour and a privilege to serve as Director of Schools, and that the Education Department remains committed to retaining, strengthening and deepening the positive work that we undertake together to ensure that our schools, colleges, academies and trusts continue to flourish in providing an authentically Catholic education.

St John Henry Newman reminds us that to live is to change and as we continue to implement our Diocesan strategy for academisation, numerous national developments continue to appear on the horizon. 2025 will bring for us anticipated changes to curriculum provision and inspection frameworks alongside the ongoing implementation of the Religious Education and Prayer and Liturgy Directories, with the Catholic Life and Mission Directory still to come.

It is within this context that the Education Department is keen to hear how we can continue to support you in offering reasons for living and hoping to your pupils, staff, governors, directors, families and parish communities. To this end we will be inviting all of our schools and colleges to share their views, observations and suggestions over the coming months as we journey forward with unity of purpose.

As we enter into the Year of Jubilee together, we are reminded that to educate is to take a risk, and to hold out to the present a hope that can shatter determinism and fatalism.¹ Within his Homily during Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, after the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica was opened, Pope Francis shared with us that we too are called to set out with the marvel of the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. *'The Gospel tells us that, having heard the message of the angel, they "went with haste" (Lk 2:16). In this same way, "with haste", we too are called to recover lost hope, to renew that hope in our hearts, and to sow seeds of hope...do not delay, do not hesitate, but allow yourselves to be drawn along by the Good News.'*

I wish you all a blessed and fruitful 2025, filled with the joy, happiness and hope of our Jubilee year.

Richard

¹ Pope Francis, Video message on the Occasion of the Meeting Organised by the Congregation for Catholic Education: "Global Compact Education" at the Pontifical Lateran University, 15 October 2020.

2. PILGRIMS OF HOPE - THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

For information	✓
For action	✓



Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica in Rome to mark the beginning of the Year of Jubilee on Christmas Eve. In his Midnight Mass homily, he called us to *“recover lost hope, to renew hope in our hearts and to sow seeds of hope”*. The symbolism of the logo for this jubilee year underscores this call.

‘The logo shows four stylized figures, representing all of humanity, coming from the four corners of the earth. They embrace each other to indicate the solidarity and fraternity which should unite all peoples. The figure at the front is holding onto the cross. It is not only the sign of the faith which this lead figure embraces, but also of hope, which can never be abandoned, because we are always in need of hope, especially in our moments of greatest need. There are the rough waves under the figures, symbolising the fact that life’s pilgrimage does not always go smoothly in calm waters. Often the circumstances of daily life and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That’s why we should pay special attention to the lower part of the cross which has been elongated and turned into the shape of an anchor which is let down into the waves. The anchor is well known as a symbol of hope. In maritime jargon the ‘anchor of hope’ refers to the reserve anchor used by vessels involved in emergency manoeuvres to stabilise the ship during storms. It is worth noting that the image illustrates the pilgrim’s journey not as an individual undertaking, but rather as something communal, marked by an increasing dynamism leading one ever closer to the cross. The cross in the logo is by no means static, but it is also dynamic. It bends down towards humanity, not leaving human beings alone, but stretching out to them to offer the certainty of its presence and the security of hope.’ You can find this explanation and more on the official Vatican Jubilee website <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025.html>. On this website you can also find links to The Jubilee Prayer and the official hymn for the 2025 Jubilee.

LAUNCH DAY FOR SCHOOLS – 24TH JANUARY

Although the Year of Jubilee has officially begun, Bishop Marcus Stock, Chair of the CES, has called for schools to mark the launch of the Jubilee together on January 24th.

As promised, CAFOD, working alongside CARITAS and CYMFed, has produced a number of resources for launch day including celebrations of the word for children and for young people, a digital version of their Pilgrims of Hope map and the See, Judge, Act worksheet,

which is a sheet to help pupils consider, in the light of scripture, the action they'd like to take during the Jubilee Year. <https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools/jubilee-launch-day> .

There is a suggested plan for the Jubilee Launch Day for schools that can be found here: [Education Jubilee Launch day plan.pdf](#). The plan includes links to order prayer cards, the Pilgrims of Hope maps for classrooms and the Jubilee banner for the school gates. We hope all schools will watch the **Launch Day film** that will be shared by CAFOD soon.



Alongside the official Pilgrims of Hope logo, CAFOD have commissioned an 'icon from artist Mulugeta Araya in Ethiopia, for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Ethiopia was chosen because of the strong tradition of iconography within the country and to demonstrate that this is a global Jubilee - not just something that is happening in England and Wales.' <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/jubilee-icon>

There are reflections for schools that accompany the icon, which can be found on the jubilee-schools website (see the 'launch day' link above).

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Mission Together have several resources for primary schools to help you celebrate the Year of Jubilee including prayers, a Jubilee Five Fact Assembly and scripture that focuses on hope. A 'joyful Jubilee hymn' is on its way too.

You can find the resources here: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/jubilee-2025-pilgrims-of-hope/>

SVP Mini Vinnies have resources to support Mini Vinnie's groups in schools, though they could be used with the whole school community. For example, their 'Monthly Prayer and Action' may offer a further way to journey through the year as pilgrims of hope <https://act.svp.org.uk/page/153870/action/1>

SVP Youth 'The Young Vincentian Team at the SVP has been hard at work developing a variety of resources for schools to use during the Jubilee Year. Every day, SVP members pilgrimage, walking through the doors of those in need—offering care, support, friendship, and hope. Entering someone's space requires an invitation and an open door. During this Jubilee Year, as the Holy Door in Rome opens to invite all to become pilgrims of hope, we want to emphasise that behind every door we open, and every doorway we enter, we are invited to encounter God.' Their resources include resources to support the **CYMFed Faith in Action Award** during the Jubilee Year, including a Pilgrim Passport with social action ideas for participants.

<https://act.svp.org.uk/page/153862/action/1>

CBCEW (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Resources on the Bishops' Conference website include 'Unpacking the Jubilee', which may be helpful for staff and secondary students and a Reflection and Social Action Guide. The latter is aimed at parishes, but could be adapted for use with staff or KS4/KS5 students.

'Minutes of Hope' is the largest digital project ever undertaken by the Church in England and Wales. The project is collating thousands of one minute videos showing the hope our faith can bring to the world today. The website states: *'If you've got a story, testimony or example you want to share then upload a clip to the project and it will help inspire hope in those who see it during the year of Jubilee and beyond.*

<https://minutesofhope.com/> '

EWTN Vatican have shared some suggestions for how we can make the Year of Jubilee a time of spiritual renewal in the Catholic Church. Any one of these suggestions would be helpful in deepening your own spirituality on your pilgrim journey this year.

<https://www.ewtnvatican.com/articles/jubilee-2025-new-years-resolutions-and-resources-4163>

If you have found other websites and/or resources helpful for celebrating this Year of Jubilee, then do please send me a link and I can include it in future newsletters.

julia.cunningham@dioceseofhsrewsbury.org

In addition, do please tag us into your Pilgrims of Hope celebrations [@EducationShrew](#) on X

3. APPOINTMENT AND CHANGES OF HEADTEACHER

For information	✓
For action	

Johanna Flynn has now taken up the post of Headteacher at St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead.

We will keep Johanna and all our Headteachers in our prayers as they continue in their vocation as Catholic Leaders.

4. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS VACANCY

For information	✓
For action	

Bishop Mark and the Diocesan Trustees are seeking to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced candidate from primary phase to the role of Deputy Director of

Schools for the Shrewsbury Diocese. Full details of the position will be circulated to schools and parishes in the next few weeks.

5. 'TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY': PRAYER AND LITURGY DIRECTORY UPDATE

For information	✓
For action	✓

Thank you for the ongoing commitment to the implementation of this most important document across our diocesan schools. Following a series of productive Working Party meetings, members of the Education Department met with Bishop Mark and Canon Christopher Matthews in December to offer feedback and proposals which focused on prayer inside and outside of a classroom setting.

As a consequence of these discussions, we are currently finalising supplementary guidance notes to accompany the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, which focus on the practical implementation and facilitation of prayer, along with exemplars of what that prayer might look like in different contexts. We hope that these notes will be a useful tool for schools to use and will be circulated this coming term.

It is envisaged that we will adopt a similar approach to both Celebrations of the word and Holy Mass, with supplementary guidance notes being made available to schools over the coming terms.

A reminder that the following CPDF sessions are planned for this term and year ahead:

11/02/2025	1pm-4pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 3 - Mass- Liturgy and rubric	How do we celebrate the Mass as a school community?	Loreto Education Centre, WA14 4GZ
13/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 4 - Mass - practicalities	How do we plan for the celebration of Holy Mass? What is required?	Virtual
21/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 5 - Celebration of the Word	What is a celebration of the word? What does it look like in class? What does it look like with a larger group? Who can do what?	Virtual
01/07/2025	1pm-4pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 6 - Formation, progression and ministry	An opportunity to explore engagement and participation in prayer and liturgy in school, including a focus on ministry. How can we form our school communities in their participation of prayer and liturgy? What does progression look like?	Loreto Education Centre, WA14 4GZ

NB: For the in-person afternoons, lunch will be provided free of charge from 12.30pm. To book on to the sessions please follow this link [Book CPDF](#)

6. CSI (CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE) - JANUARY 2025 UPDATE

For information	✓
For action	



A reminder that support sessions for the national framework for inspections are offered to all schools, particularly those preparing for inspection. These sessions will be held at Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port on Friday January 31st, and Friday 27th April at 9.30am. Please book onto these sessions via the website [here](#). School leaders, including RE leads, chaplains and governors are welcome to attend.

The Inspection Handbook and CSED (Catholic Self-evaluation Document) template can be found on the [website](#). Also available are the parental and staff questionnaires. Feedback from pupils on the three areas of inspection can be given using the school's own pupil voice processes and procedures. **Please ensure you are using the most up to date version of the Inspection Handbook.** Reference to the *Change log* on the website will highlight the key updates and changes made.

Please note, use of the CSED template is not mandatory, however self-evaluation is. The framework expects leaders *and governors* to undertake regular (annual) monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and mission, religious education, and prayer and liturgy.

Compliance is a limiting judgement in this new CSI framework. To check you are compliant with the expectations of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and with the directives of Bishop Mark, please click on this [link](#).

7. THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND/OR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

For information	✓
For action	

We have been approached by a number of schools seeking clarification on this particular subject - the CES guidance can be [found here](#). Should any such situations occur within your school then please do contact your School Officer or another member of the Education Department to discuss further.

8. ACADEMY STRATEGY UPDATE

For information	✓
For action	

I am continuing to meet with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of all schools with indicative target dates of 2024-25 and 2025-26 along with the relevant trust CEO to discuss next steps as we look to implement and secure Bishop Mark's vision for education across the Diocese together.

All of the documentation for academisation has been updated for the 2024-25 academic year and can be found on the [diocesan website](#).

9. DIOCESAN PROTOCOLS & FOUNDATION GOVERNOR TERMS OF OFFICE

For information	✓
For action	

Following the issuing of Diocesan Protocols in October, a number of schools have contacted us regarding Governor Protocol 18 (page 16) which states that Foundation Governors will only be permitted to serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms of office on the same Governing Board. Some schools have stated that if implemented immediately, a number of governors would need to resign which would seriously impact the ability of the board to operate effectively.

As the Diocesan Protocols are a new document introduced in October 2024, and following discussions with the CES, the following transitional arrangements have been approved by Diocesan Trustees to support the continuation of strong governance for our Voluntary Aided schools as detailed below.

Current Term of Office as of 1.1.25	Length of service remaining at current school for Foundation Governors
1 st term of office	Maximum of 2 more terms of office
2 nd term of office	Maximum of 1 more term of office
3 rd term of office or more	Foundation Governors can continue to serve for the remainder of their current term of office When their current term of office expires, they may also make a request to the Diocese to serve for an additional term of office

10. SUPPORTING LOCAL AUTHORITY SEND PROVISION

For information	
For action	✓

We are aware that a number of Local Authorities are inviting schools to support their LA SENd strategy by providing or expanding on-site Resource Provision, Alternative Provision or SEN 'Hub' bases.

If any schools are interested in supporting SEN provision, we ask that they do not engage in any dialogue with Local Authority colleagues before speaking with their Diocesan School Officer in the first instance.

11. ADMISSIONS

For information	
For action	✓

Thank you to those schools that have already sent through a copy of their 2026-27 Admissions Policy. If you are consulting on changes to your policy, then we will look to consider your amendments and respond before the 31st January 2025 deadline.

All schools are asked to submit a copy of their final Admissions Policy for 2026-27 to the Diocese for our records before **15th March 2025** - please email Admissions@dioceseofshrewsbury.org. A copy should also be on the school's website by this date.

Governors are reminded that the school's Admission Policy should align with Diocesan model policies for schools and academies which can be found on the Education Department website.

12. CES ANNUAL CENSUS 2025

For information	
For action	✓

The CES census 2025 will start on 16th January in England and all schools should have received a letter on 12th December 2024 from the CES outlining the necessary practicalities. The letter has been included as an appendix to this newsletter.

If there are any questions or queries then please contact the Census helpdesk via <http://cescensus.org.uk/helpdesk/>. There is also a helpdesk telephone number if schools have a problem accessing the online helpdesk: 020 7901 1909. We strongly

advise schools to use the online helpdesk as it is more efficient and is monitored outside normal hours during the busiest period.

Thank you as always for supporting the annual CES Census.

13. CES APPRAISAL POLICY

For information	✓
For action	

A number of schools have contacted us enquiring as to the validity of the CES Appraisal Policy following the removal of the requirement for performance related pay from the STPCD this year. The CES have reflected on the changes in the STPCD and concluded that there was no need to change their model policy in response. We have included the response from the CES below:

The requirement for performance related pay was removed from the STPCD for this year, but for both leaders and teachers there is still a requirement to consider annually whether to increase the salary for those who have completed a year of service since the last annual pay determination and to make a written pay recommendation following the outcome of the school's appraisal arrangements.

It would still therefore be appropriate to make a recommendation in the appraisal report. Employers can also still choose to retain performance related pay if they wish (see paragraphs 11 and 19 of the STPCD). For leaders, the requirement in paragraph 11.2(a) of the STPCD is for the recommendation on pay to be made in writing as part of the individual's appraisal report although this wording is not repeated for teachers. Here is the most recent guidance from the DfE:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66a38172ab418ab055592dc5/Managing_Teachers_and_Leaders_Pay_-_July_2024.pdf

The statutory deadlines for pay recommendations have been removed from the STPCD but many employers decided to maintain them as they provide a structured timeframe in which to provide decisions. If individual employers wish to make amendments to paragraph 8.5 of the model they are welcome to do so as the content will need to reflect what is in their pay policy.

14. AMENDMENT TO CES MODEL CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR FIXED TERM AND TEMPORARY POSTS

For information	✓
For action	✓

The CES have made a small amendment to the model contracts of employment on their [website](#) as follows:

In relation to the wording for fixed term contracts and temporary contracts, they have amended clause 16.1 or 17.1 (depending on the contract) to provide that the contract can be terminated by either party giving notice to the other. The previous version only provided for notice to be given by the employer which meant that the wording for fixed term and temporary contracts did not align with the wording for permanent contracts.

The wording for permanent contracts remains unchanged.

The Business Manager & Support Staff contracts (both school and academy), which contain slightly different clauses relating to the giving of notice, are unaffected and accordingly remain the same.

15. GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

For information	✓
For action	✓

Following a meeting of Diocesan Trustees, all Foundation Governor applications, including renewals, will now need to be supported by a counter signature from the applicant's parish priest who can confirm a minimum of 12 months continuous practice. A period of 12 months practice will also be required for those recently received into the Church.

Should any parents serve as a foundation, community or co-opted governor, then we would ask that care is taken to ensure that the total number of parents does not make up more than 1/3 of the total number.

A reminder that all Governors should be using a school email address for all correspondence in relation to their role as a school governor and **not a personal email address**.

As we start the new term, can I remind schools and academies that although we welcome nominations for Foundation Governors from schools and Governing Bodies, potential Governors should not assume they have been appointed as a Foundation

Governor until they have received notification of their term of office in writing, as it is the Bishop that makes the final decision on this matter. Particular care needs to be taken if you are considering transferring a Governor from a previous status (e.g. Parent to a Foundation Governor) as they must be formally appointed to the position of Foundation Governor.

16. CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS FORUM

For information	✓
For action	

Apologies that the Autumn Term meeting had to be cancelled due to staff illness, but we hope that colleagues are able to join us for our Spring Term meeting and details are provided below.

As always, booking is available via the [Diocesan Website](#).

Spring Term	20 th March 2025 6.30 – 8.00pm	St Wilfrid’s Catholic Primary School, Greenbank Lane, Hartford. CW8 1JW
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17. CHURCH LICENCE USAGE AGREEMENT

For information	
For action	✓

Thank you for your assistance in completing the newly provided licence usage agreements that were made available to schools in November. We appreciate the condensed timescales at the end of the Autumn Term and remind schools that these agreements should be used for events going forward.

A reminder that no agreement would be required for schools attending Mass in the church, but it is required for events organised by the school that fall outside of the usual provision of a parish church.

The Diocese has also made available a ‘joint event’ licence for those occasions when more than one school is involved in the same event which highlights that the schools who are signatories will be jointly and severally liable under the agreement. Copies of the single event and joint event licenses can be found on the Education Department Website. The Diocese suggests that the schools work on an agreed single risk assessment for the event that they are all content with, as five separate risk assessments for one event would be impractical in terms of understanding responsibilities.

18. SENIOR AND RESERVED POST APPOINTMENTS

For information	
For action	✓

A reminder once again that the Diocesan Department of Education **MUST** be involved in Headship, Deputy Headship, Heads of RE and Chaplain appointments. In addition, if schools and academies are seeking to appoint to posts that have a responsibility for Catholic ethos, then again, the Diocese must be involved.

The updated 2024 *Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers* also extends Diocesan involvement to all **temporary** positions, including Executive Headships and Heads of School. If schools are making **temporary leadership arrangements**, they must also have these approved by the relevant Diocesan officer and have gone through an approved recruitment process.

If schools are wishing to extend any temporary arrangements beyond existing timescales agreed with the Diocese, then please contact us at the earliest opportunity.

Please ensure that the Diocese is contacted prior to any recruitment process commencing.

The following documents are available on our website:

- [The Bishops' Memorandum on the appointment of staff In Catholic schools \(2024\)](#)
- [Appointing a new Headteacher – Guidance for Governors & Directors](#)
- [Appointing a new Deputy Headteacher - Guidance for Headteachers & Governors](#)
- [Appointing a new Head of Religious Education - Guidance for Headteachers & Governors](#)

19.CCRS

For information	✓
For action	

(Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies) – New Modules beginning now!

The CCRS course resumes this month with in-person classes in **Altrincham** (subject to student take-up, at St Vincent's Parish Centre WA14 2BP) and an online study option,

with two short seminars per module in either **Birkenhead** or **Wythenshawe**. Students are welcome to begin the course at the start of any module. Details are available here <https://educationshrewsbury.org/formation-development/ccrs/> or from ccrs@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

The online study timetable for this half term is:

Wythenshawe

Seminars for Online students – **RE in the Classroom** module: Saturday mornings, 9.30-10.45am, 11 January and 8 February.

Birkenhead Seminars for Online Students – **RE in the Classroom** module: Thursday evenings, 5-6.15pm, 9 January and 6 February

Subject to student take-up, we will study the **New Testament** module in Altrincham, with two all-day classes (9am – 3.15pm) on Thursdays in January.

CCRS comprises eight modules, which must be complete within five years. It has, for over a quarter of a century, enabled those responsible for passing on our Christian Catholic faith to gain a deeper knowledge and fuller understanding of that faith. CCRS is the only nationally recognised award of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. **New students are always welcome. Please contact ccrs@dioceseofshrewsbury.org**

20.KEY DATES THIS HALF TERM

For information	✓
For action	

School Leadership	16/01/2025	New Headteachers' Induction Programme
* School Leadership	16/01/2025	Induction for New Foundation Governors
* School Leadership	16/01/2025	Induction for New Foundation Governors
Primary RE	22/01/2025	Primary Curriculum Working Party
School Leadership	22/01/2025	Termly Headteacher Briefings
School Leadership	23/01/2025	Termly Headteacher Briefings

Chaplaincy	28/01/2025	COAST
Primary RE	28/01/2025	New RE Coordinator Induction
* School Leadership	28/01/2025	Termly Briefing for Governing Bodies
* School Leadership	29/01/2025	Termly Briefing for Governing Bodies
Primary RE	29/01/2025	Vine and Branches Y4 preparation for Desert to Garden
Primary RE	30/01/2025	Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 3
* School Leadership	30/01/2025	Termly Briefing for Governing Bodies
* Denominational Inspections	31/01/2025	School support under the CSI Framework
Primary RE	03/02/2025	Vine and Branches Y1 preparation for Desert to Garden
Primary RE	04/02/2025	Vine and Branches Y2 preparation Desert to Garden
Primary RE	05/02/2025	Vine and Branches Y3 preparation for Desert to Garden
School Leadership	07/02/2025	Primary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum
School Leadership	07/02/2025	Primary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum
Primary RE	10/02/2025	RE Lead Hub Meeting
* Prayer and Liturgy	11/02/2025	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 3 - Mass-Liturgy and rubric
Primary RE	12/02/2025	RE Lead Hub Meeting
Primary RE	13/02/2025	RE Lead Hub Meeting
Primary RE	14/02/2025	RE Lead Hub Meeting

*These events are open to and appropriate for governors to attend.

To book please follow the link to [BOOK A CPDF COURSE](#)